

## A Slave To Second Best

*Numbers 10:29-31 KJV And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguei the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. [30] And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. [31] And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.*

### I. Introduction—The Dilemma of Life

One of the biggest things that we have to learn about our physical life and our spiritual life is that we can become slaves to second best. It generally follows a pattern of our making poor choices about various things.

Perhaps nowhere else in the world is the idea propagated that we are entitled to having an easy way of things. We sometimes settle in and begin to blame others for our own lack of success and lack of opportunities.

One guy said it like this concerning a guy he had counseled:

You work late every night. You come home tired and burned out. You eat dinner in a coma and then sit down and waste hours on the internet. You are too tired and stressed to do anything—like take a walk or play with your kids. This goes on for years. Your wife asks you to talk to her. You say, “Later!”

Three years later, you come home to an empty house and a note that she has left you and taken the kids. You created that!

If you are going to make any head way in this life, you must work. If you are going to make any headway with your spiritual life, you are going to have to get some discipline and quit being a slave to second best.

- When you don't follow up on taking control of your thought life, the devil runs circles in your mind.

- When you don't resist the devil, he will not flee from you.
- When you don't attend worship services on a regular basis because you were too busy, you will find a spiritual lethargy prevailing in your life.
- When you don't spend time with the Word, the devil has free access to your emotions and overwhelms you with doubt.

-The Christian life often demands that we make hard but sanctified choices.

-David Bernard in his book, *Holiness: A Second Look* noted:

Specifically, holiness consists of two components: (1) *separation* from sin and worldliness and (2) *dedication* to God and His will. . . . Holiness means we cannot love this ungodly world system, identify with it, become attached to the things in it, or participate in its sinful pleasures and activities.

We have to refuse to be a slave to second-best!

## **II. The Text From Numbers**

When we come to this particular text in the Bible, at this point, Israel had traveled for three months after they had left Egypt. Now they had waited for an additional nine months before moving forward.

It was in the solitude of the wild, rocky, and barren places that God had chosen to fellowship with them. It was in those wild rocks that they were to keep the anniversary of the first Passover.

But now it is time to look forward, to discover, to pursue, to capture, and to incorporate what God had brought them to this place to do.

During their nine month long tenure there in the rocks, one of Moses' relatives had come along. His name was Hobab and he was a Midianite. He was basically like the Bedouins that wandered the desert. To those who read Westerns, Hobab was like one of the old scouts of the land. He knew every crevice, crack, cranny, and nook in the rocks and desert.

There is some debate among commentaries concerning the identity of Hobab. Some indicate that this was really Jethro, his father-in-law, while others believe that this was really a brother-in-law because Jethro would have most likely have already been dead at this point in time.

Hobab knew where the springs were, he knew where the places were that offered what little grass was available, and he knew the short-cuts, the camping places, and the safest rites of passage in the region.

Moses, who had forgotten some of his desert skills while running Jethro's flocks, asked Hobab to go with them and guide them with his practical abilities. Eugene Peterson, in *The Message*, sums it up like this, "We need your eyes." Moses felt like it would be a great advantage to have Hobab with them to accomplish the incredible feat of moving into the Promised Land.

#### **A. The Purpose of the Journey**

*Numbers 10:29 . . . We are journeying. . .*

Moses was determined to reach his destination. That simple statement seemed to address everything that their whole purpose was about.

This is not a strange concept because all throughout ancient biblical history there has been that determination to go beyond to the place where God was calling men to go. God had prepared a place for the children of Israel where they would no longer struggle with the bondage of Egypt.

Listen to Scripture and see if you can pick up on that same cry, "We are journeying. . ."

*Hebrews 13:14 KJV For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

*Micah 2:10 KJV Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.*

*Philippians 3:20 KJV For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

The purpose of the journey is to get us from this world to the high and holy one that awaits us in Heaven.

This journey begins the day you're converted and it continues every single day that you live! You advance in the journey by continual spiritual adjustments to your character. Those adjustments can only really be made when you are willing to let the love of God and the knowledge of His Word transform you.

Canaan was highly prized by the Israelites because it was the end of their journey. Heaven is the end of our journey and just as Israel had to pass through the dangers of the terrible and unforgiving wilderness, there are spiritual dangers that every believer will be exposed to.

## **B. The Invitation of Life**

*Numbers 10:29. . . Come thou with us. . .*

The invitation that came from Moses was not some half-hearted explanation about some "pie-in-the-sky" stuff. Not on your life. . . . . Moses had already been to the Promised Land in his heart and mind. He was merely waiting to get there physically.

No one has ever been won by a half-hearted effort. Nothing great has ever been accomplished by the half-hearted. It is an intense man that grips us. It is a heart on fire that ignites the hearts of others.

This invitation of Moses held out a promise; a promise of something good in the future.

I think that all of us are aware of the fact that a believer is one who is journeying through the wilderness of this world.

*1 Peter 2:11-12 KJV Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; [12] Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they*

*may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

We are pressing toward heaven and we have to make it no matter what it may cost us!

Hobab's problem was that he had become a slave to second best. He gave far too much thought to what he would lose in the trade in the present for something better in the future. Moses knew where Israel had been in the past and he knew where they were going to in the future but Hobab had none of that working for him.

All he could see was a rag-tag bunch of folks who were on some "experiment" of sorts that did not deal with what he considered to be true reality.

There was a prevailing mentality in Hobab's mind of fearfulness. He was afraid that where they were going to would be less than what he currently had.

What does a second best mentality look like? It is one that has some of the following conditions.

- I have less spiritual convictions now than I had ten years ago.
- I am not sure about the hail and sleet of persecution.
- I don't know if I can deal with the possibilities of the call to sacrifice.
- I cannot be sure if I will make it through the fog of doubt.
- I am not sure if God is really calling me to do all of this.
- I am not sure if I want to go to a church that has a high standard of holiness and treasures the Word of God.
- I don't know if I can make it with the emphasis on the prayer and revival.

If you can ever make the determination to come on with us, Hobab, there will be much in your life that will benefit you.

There is the offer of salvation. To be blood-bought, filled with the Holy Ghost and baptized in Jesus name means a start on the greatest spiritual journey of all time.

There will never be a time when we are not free from difficulties along the way and there are battles that will have to be fought but there is an ultimate triumph to experience.

Not only is there an offer of salvation but there is also an opportunity to serve. Hobab grew up in the wilderness and there would be an opportunity for him to put to use his knowledge to help the children of Israel make it.

If you are down, one of the best ways to get yourself out of the doldrums is to serve someone. Help someone else to make it to the place that God wants them to get to.

### **C. The Great Reward**

*Numbers 10:29. . . We will do thee good. . .*

Moses promised Hobab that if he would make the journey with them that something very good and valuable would take place in his life. Hobab was a Midianite and if you fast-forward to Numbers 31 it describes how that they were destroyed because their sins were so horrendous in the sight of God.

If Hobab remained with his people then he was destroyed. There is no way to know but the real fact of the matter is that if he would have taken up the invitation of Moses, he would have been safe but he was a slave to second best.

If you are willing to sacrifice, you will be saved. If you are willing to be surrender, there is a sense of safety that will be provided to you. But if you only flip over a few chapters in the Bible to Numbers 22 (vv. 4-7) you discover that things began to deteriorate and disease ran through the people and many of them died.

God sees things much differently than we do because He looks from finish to start and what Hobab did not realize was that he was being allowed an escape route but he could not bring himself to pay the price.

As long as you are a Midianite you will find a lot to complain about the people of God. As long as you are on the outside looking in, there will be a whole lot to make fun of and complain about. But I can make an appeal to you that if you will get

plugged into an old-fashioned apostolic church that there are many blessings that can take place.

- The Church can do you good by giving you some good company to grow with.
- The Church can do you good by giving you good instructions in doctrine and holiness.
- The Church can do you good by giving you a place to feel the presence of the Lord.
- The Church can do you good by giving you an outlet for anointed prayer.
- The Church can do you good by giving you a shelter from trouble, anguish, and trials.
- The Church can do you good by giving you the greatest good which is going to Heaven with the saints of God.

-I don't have any complaints about the Church. It is one of the vehicles of grace that the Lord is going to use to get us out of this wicked, delirious world!

#### **D. The Great Mistake**

*Numbers 10:30. . . I will not go. . .*

After Hobab hears all that Moses makes in the offer, he makes his greatest mistake. . . "I will not go!" He then begins to tell him the six things that held him back.

- His own land.
- His kin folks.
- His material possessions.
- He looked on God's people as strangers.
- He looked at the opportunity as something that had no opportunity.
- He was concerned about the uncertainty.

-As I have already mentioned Numbers 22 and 31, if Hobab could have known the future he would have never turned Moses down but he could not see that far down the road. It is too bad that Hobab was a slave to second best!

### **III. Conclusion—A Powerful Witness**

I conclude with a story that I heard Pastor Larry Booker tell in a sermon he preached on August 4, 2007 at the First Pentecostal Church of North Little Rock, Arkansas. The title of the message was “Three Attitudes of Jewish Babylon.”

I understand just as you do that holiness is far more than dress but this story very succinctly provides for us the testimony of a young lady who decided she did not want to be a slave to second best.

There was a young lady in his church named Naomi who was in ROTC. Brother was unaware that she was in the program until after she had endured the difficulties she would be forced to endure. She was made a captain, the highest in her class, and had apparently excelled in the program.

One day she was called in by the people in charge of the program and they informed her she was going to take a trip. They informed her that she would have to wear pants. She politely declined to do so to which they told her that she would have to. They called her in numerous times almost to the point of harassment and each time she would tell them that she was not going to go if she had to wear pants.

Finally, they told her that they were going to call in her parents and pastor. She told them that would be fine if they wanted to talk to them. She told them that this was not an issue with her parents and pastor and no matter what they said she still was not going to wear pants. She said that it was not a parent’s thing, pastor thing, church thing, it was a God “thing” and she would not wear pants. She said this is between her and God.

So, then they told her that they were going to dismiss her from the program. She told them she understood that if that was what they had to do but it was not going to change her stance. They told her she wouldn’t have enough credits to graduate and she continued to kindly deflect their attitude and told them it would be alright if they did this but she still could not consent to it. It was a matter between her and God.

Shortly before the trip, she was called in one last time and they told her, “Look Naomi, you can go on the trip and you can wear your dress. Furthermore, all the girls in your troop have notified us that if we “can” you that they will be quitting too. So, we have decided to let you wear your dress and all of the other girls have



decided that from now on as long as you are in this program, they are going to wear dresses too!”

Brother also said that he watched this girl in a graduating class of over 1200 give a valedictory address to 6000 people. In that speech given in the same place that Madonna and Britney Spears had performed, sixteen times she brought up the words, God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do what you want to do! You can be a slave to second best if you would like to but I am going to do everything in my power to make it without being in bondage to the pressures of this old world.